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A GUIDE

TO THE

Fortifications and Battlefields

AROUND PETERSBURG.

With a Splendid Map,

From Actual Surveys made by the U. S. Engineer Dep'tmt.

PREPARED AND PUBLISHED AS A HAND-BOOK BY THE
PROPRIETORS OF JARRATT'S HOTEL.

PETERSBURG, VA.

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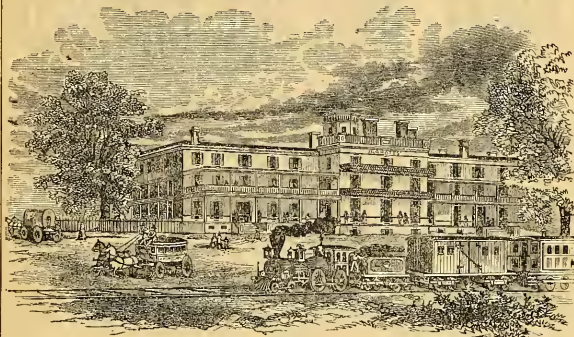
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Introduction.

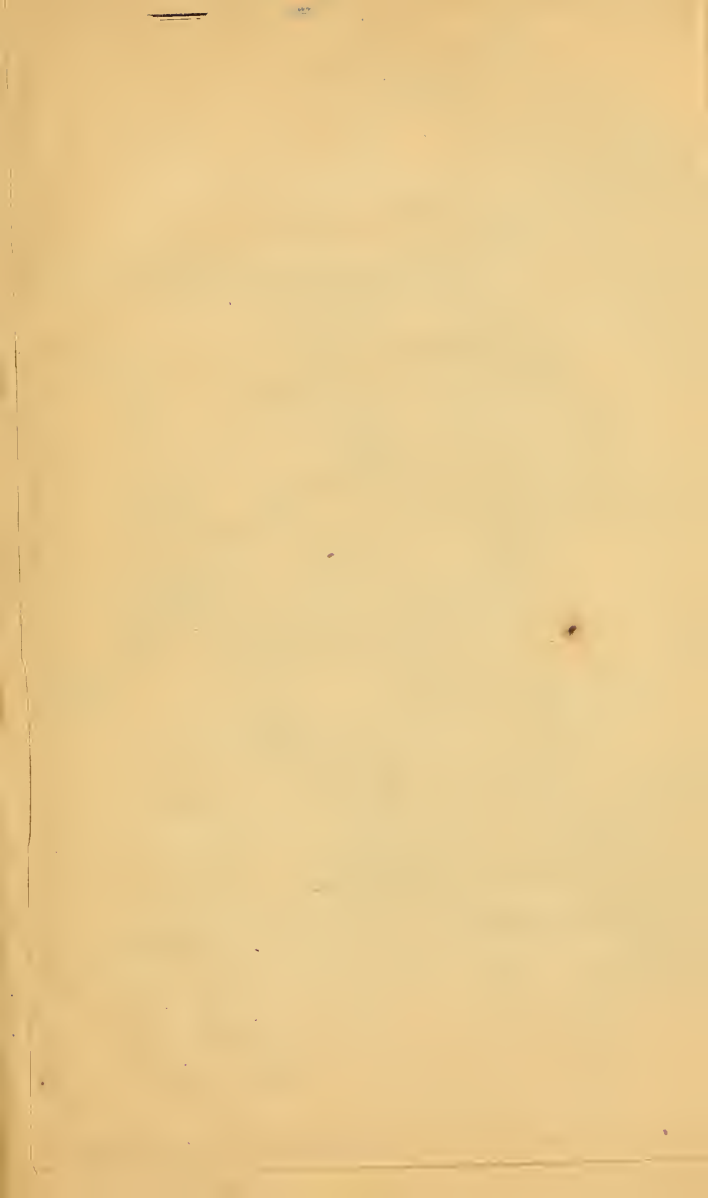
THIS little volume is published as a Hand-Book to visitors who visit the city of Petersburg, for the purpose of reviewing the fortifications and battlefields around the city. The material has been kindly furnished by one of the most efficient Engineer officers of the U. S. Army, who was himself a prominent actor in the great siege, and can be relied upon as accurate in every particular. The map which accompanies this work thus becomes perfectly clear to every reader.

It was remarked by an English gentleman visiting these works, that "if these battlefields, surrounded by such memories as they are, were in Europe, they would be visited by more Americans than they now are." And his remark was true. How comparatively few of the people of this country have visited these fields, so accessible and possessing so much more historic interest than any equal extent of ground in this country. Even of those who have done so, but few of them have obtained an intelligent idea of the siege, the position of the two armies, the character of the tremendous defensive works which cover the country about the city. People leave their homes with the erroneous idea that Petersburg is merely a sort of suburb to Richmond, to be visited for a few hours if at all. Instead of being secondary, it is *the prominent point of interest and importance.*

The tremendous struggle, that resulted in the fall of Richmond and the close of the rebellion, was around Petersburg, and here it is that for eight long months your husbands, sons, brothers, and dearest friends fought and suffered.

When the history of the late war is written, every foot of this ground will have a prominent mention, and to aid those who visit these fields and wish to obtain an intelligent idea of their history, this guide book has been prepared. Hoping it may be a useful and instructive companion, it is respectfully submitted by

THE PUBLISHERS.



Prepared expressly for the Guests of Jarratt's Hotel Petersburg Va.



THE SIEGE OF PETERSBURG.

The following statement of interesting events which transpired before Petersburg from the 15th of June, 1864, to the 3rd of April, 1865, is intended to accompany and explain the "Sketch of the Entrenched Lines" immediately in front of that city, for the information of the many visitors who, for years to come, will visit the ground made historical by the "brave deeds of brave men." The account will be necessarily brief, its object being to guide the reader along the continuous lines of earthworks of the two contending armies—to enumerate some of the chief points of interest, and, in a condensed form, follow the different steps taken to force the evacuation of the city.

On the evening of the 13th of June, the Second Corps, the advance of the Army of the Potomac, after the unprecedented campaign from the Rapidan, reached the North bank of the James, and on the following morning commenced its passage by being ferried across by steam. By midnight of the 15th the Ponton Bridge near the Southern point of Wynock Neck was constructed, and the Ninth Corps began to cross. The distance from the bridge to Petersburg is twenty-two miles. The Fifth and Sixth Corps successively followed the first two. A part of the Army of the James (Divisions of the Tenth and Eighteenth Corps) had been attached to the Army of the Potomac during the operations about Cold Harbor, and, upon the withdrawal of the troops from that point, had marched to the White House, and were thence transported by water to City Point. Upon landing, the last Corps was immediately moved forward against Petersburg, the first assault upon the

defensive works surrounding the place being made on the evening of the 15th, when a portion of the line was broken and held. About sunset of the following day a general assault was made along the whole line of the United States troops then in position, and a most brilliant sight was presented after dark by the heavy discharge of artillery and the countless shells which lit up the surrounding gloom as they sped on their way, "swift messengers of death." Both on the 17th and 18th the attacking columns of the Eighteenth, Second and Ninth Corps renewed their desperate efforts against the enemy's front, at times reaching and mounting his very parapets, and would then be compelled to retire, after most desperate fighting and heavy loss. The ground, however, gained at that time, remained in possession of the United States forces; it was immediately entrenched, and continued to be, with some alterations at subsequent times during the siege, the advanced position of the troops.

For two days the opposing armies remained quiet, to recuperate their strength, after the fatiguing marches and severe engagements; but hostilities were again resumed on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd, the Fifth Corps having in the meantime come up. During these days an effort was made to turn the right flank of and act in rear of the enemy. The Second and Sixth Corps were the active participants in the severe fights which took place at this time in the endeavor to strike the Weldon Railroad. The sketch shows the first line of the enemy, (since leveled,) entrenched some months before Grant's Army appeared in front of Petersburg, and from portions of which the former was driven during the assault of the first few days. The famous Battery No. 5 is a very strong salient at the North-Eastern angle of this entrenched position. At this time the line of the United States troops extended from the Appomattox, on the right, near Page's, in a Southerly direction, by Hare's, (now Fort Steadman,) and in front of the present line, as represented on the Sketch, to the Lunette on the Jerusalem Plank Road; thence, nearly parallel to that road, with the left refused, and again striking it near the

Williams House. During the latter part of June and the whole of July the Armies were engaged in rectifying and strengthening their respective lines, the construction of redoubts, batteries and covered ways, the preparation of siege material (galions, fascines, etc.) on the one part, and the arrangement of obstacles on the other, such as are known, in the language of military engineers, as *abattis*, *chevaux de frise*, *palisades*, *fraise* and *mines*. To describe what, in military parlance, is called a line of earthworks, would be a difficult matter; to be understood it must be seen; no one can possibly realize the appearance of the ground until after a careful inspection. The redoubts or enclosed field works, the batteries, the infantry parapets connecting them, the obstacles placed in their front, the bomb-proofs, the magazines, the soldiers' quarters or habitations, (burrowing, and one might call it burying, in the ground,) the covered ways leading to them, (intended to protect the soldier in passing from the rear to the front,) all must be examined, inspected, looked into and overlooked before one can appreciate such a condition of affairs.

Imagine, then, two such opposing lines of earth-works, at one point, for example, opposite Fort Steadman, only six hundred feet apart—very considerably less than the range of a good rifle. Remember, then, that between these two lines are two picket lines, perhaps not over two hundred feet apart, each picket ever watchful of his country's honor, by day and night and at all hours keeping a steady gaze upon every movement of his opponent; his only shield from instant death, a small mound of loose earth thrown up in front, behind which he must keep perfectly concealed; exposed at all times to sun and rain, heat and cold, he passes the long, weary hours in never-tiring watchfulness, knowing that upon his vigilance may depend the fate of an army. Not unfrequently an amicable agreement may exist between the parties not to fire, and mutual exchanges of good will pass. Tobacco, sugar and coffee are exchanged. After such an arrangement active hostilities are not resumed until "Johnny Reb" gives his brother "Yank" a timely warning, or vice versa. Should

the visitor take any prominent point from which to view these lines, he will find that only at intervals can he trace their zigzag course, the greater part being concealed from view, or hidden by intervening timber or by the irregularities of the ground.

After the very severe fighting in the month of June, but little occurred to mar the quiet and rest of the respective armies until the last few days in July. The oppressive heat of the weather and the unusually dry season, not a drop of rain having fallen for several weeks, disposed every one to keep as cool as possible. During this period, however, all were not inactive. The constant picket firing at all hours, by night and day, afforded very little chance for undisturbed slumbers, and proved rather injurious to the nervous system. A big, brawny Irish boy, a regular "auld soldier," remarked to his companion that he had enlisted to fight for "the preservation of the Constitution, but he found that tugging along over "dusty roads night after night, and fighting day after day, was "rather damaging to *his* constitution." At this time it was almost certain death to expose for a moment the slightest portion of the person. On the one side the Yankee sharp-shooter covered his body by a breastwork of sand bags, so arranged as to leave a loop-hole through which to take his deadly aim; and his brother Reb, concealed by a shield of oak wood, nearly three feet square and some three or four feet in thickness, and partly covered with a plate of iron, with a loop-hole cut in the centre, from behind which to watch his prey. These were arranged at intervals along the parapets, and concealed from view as much as possible, their locality being ascertained only by constantly watching the smoke as it arose from the rifles upon being discharged. Long and patiently would these sharp-shooters watch their opportunity, and, upon the light being cut off by a person looking through or passing in rear of the loop-hole, the unerring shot would seldom fail to kill its victim. The foliage of trees often concealed for a long time their whereabouts, as, comfortably located on some limb, they picked off their unsuspecting foe;

but upon being discovered, a well-directed fire of grape or canister would quickly bring them from out their seclusion. Strange to say, the men seemed delighted with this not very agreeable occupation of sharp-shooting, and shouts of laughter would arise from groups collected around at any successful effort. Many a man has been killed during the hasty glance over the parapet to watch the effect of his deadly missile, so keen and watchful are the eyes of either party to take advantage of the slightest exposure of the other. Can such a system of warfare be justifiable? Can the killing of an enemy by the deadly aim of a sharp-shooter be pardonable when two opposing armies are lying quietly in their entrenchments and not engaged in heated strife? And stranger still, these same men, by unauthorized truce, cease battling with each other for a time, meet and exchange friendly words, engage in a game of cards, barter sugar and coffee for tobacco, and in many ways establish a cordial feeling, only to part at some given signal to commence the work of death once more. Could all men imitate and feel the high tone of honor displayed on such occasions, there would be little cause for war. Many are the anecdotes told of the friendly meetings of those on neutral ground, the most punctilious ceremony existing, who before and after stand opposed to each other, grappling with death.

During this apparent amusement, other labors were progressing towards the fulfillment of a remarkable event in the history of the siege. A regiment from Pennsylvania, the 48th, under the command of Lt. Colonel Pleasants, not having forgotten their occupation in more peaceful times among the anthracite coal beds of their native State, conceived and executed the idea of mining and blowing up a battery of the enemy. From the report of the commanding officer a few extracts will be interesting :

"The gallery was commenced at 12 M. the 25th of June, 1864, without tools, lumber, or any of the materials requisite for such work. The mining picks were made out of those used by our pioneers; plank was obtained by tearing down

“a rebel bridge, and afterwards by sending to a saw mill five
“or six miles distant, and the material excavated carried out
“in hand-barrows constructed out of cracker boxes. The
“work progressed rapidly until the 2nd of July, when it
“reached extremely wet ground ; the timbers gave way, and
“the roof and floor of the gallery nearly met. Re-timbered
“it and started again. From this point had to excavate a
“stratum of marl, whose consistency was like putty, and
“which caused our progress to be necessarily slow. To avoid
“this, an inclined plane was started, and in 100 feet, rose
“about $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet perpendicular. On the 17th of July the
“main gallery was completed, being 510.8 feet in length.
“The enemy having obtained information of the mine,
“commenced searching for it. Orders were received to stop
“operations, which were, however, recommenced on the
“following day by starting the left lateral gallery. At 6 P. M.
“of the same day commenced the right lateral gallery. As
“the enemy could plainly be heard working over us in the
“fort, the gallery was excavated a little beyond and in rear of
“their works, and gave to it a curved line of direction. The
“left lateral gallery was stopped at midnight, July 22nd.
“The right lateral gallery, being 38 feet long, was stopped at
“6 P. M., July 23rd. The mine could have been charged
“and exploded at this time. The men were employed from
“that time in draining, timbering and placing eight magazines
“in position, and having received the order to charge the mine
“on the 27th of July, the powder was commenced to be placed
“in at 4 P. M., and finished at 10 P. M. The tamping was
“then begun, and completed by 6 P. M. the 28th.

“The charge consisted of three hundred and twenty kegs
“of powder, each containing twenty-five pounds, eight thou-
“sand pounds in all.” “The size of the crater formed by the
“explosion was at least two hundred feet long, fifty feet wide,
“and twenty-five feet deep.”

The writer of this article carefully examined the gallery,
and found it perfect work, considering the means employed
for driving it. The arrangements for ventilation were perfectly

simple and satisfactory. The explosion of the mine succeeded admirably, and the assault should have been crowned by success. The cause of failure is well known. The objective point was Cemetery Hill. Perhaps the old venerable pile of brick styled Blandford Church would not have escaped the damage by artillery, and would not have presented the same romantic appearance, had such been the case. In recent walks through the Cemetery, but little evidence was discovered of any injury from the many compliments passed between the opposing batteries. The Church and Cemetery are well worth a visit. The former, built in 1735, of brick imported from the mother country, was in use for nearly a century, and its ivy-clad walls now stand as a monument of what years ago was considered the aristocratic portion of Petersburg. In the Cemetery the stranger is not only pointed to the marble slab that marks the last resting place of a departed English General of the war of 1812, but to the wooden cross that, in those impressive words, "Our Soldiers," causes many a heart to weep over the brave men who are gathered there, the heroes of many a hard-fought battle.

After the explosion of the mine the new entrenched line was constructed, the old one being still held as a picket line, and is the one represented in the Sketch. This comprises Forts McGilvery, Stedman, Haskell, Morton, Mickle, Rice, Sedgwick, Davis, Prescott and Bross, the latter located near the Black Water Swamp, and the intervening infantry parapets. The men had been very much exposed to the constant picket firing, and as siege operations by regular approaches had been abandoned, it was merciful to remove and shelter them from unnecessary danger. If the visitor examines the abattis and chevaux-de-frise in front of the lines, he will see many indications of the leaden hail that swept over the ground. Many men were killed not only by direct but by glance shots, so that for a mile in rear of the works no spot could be considered particularly safe. From the Appomattox to Fort Sedgwick, constant firing was kept up day and night, and month after month. Forts Stedman and Sedgwick were particularly

"hot" places, so much so that the men gave the name of "Fort Hell" to the latter, and their rebel friends, not to be outdone, called Fort Mahone, *vis-a-vis* to the other, "Fort Damnation."

Before proceeding farther, let it be remarked that the names of the different field works of the U. S. lines were selected from those distinguished officers who fell in action, bravely fighting their country's battles. Those of the rebel works were generally called after the proprietors of the different localities upon which they were located, or after some officer first commanding at the particular point. The batteries on both sides are numbered. Although each foot of ground is historical, still, the points of greatest interest between the Appomattox River and the Jerusalem Plank Road are Fort Stedman, fronting the rebel Colquitt's Salient; Gracie's Salient, on the Norfolk Railroad, and in its connection, the dam over the Poo River; Fort Morton and its opposite Salient, Elliott's, rendered the more interesting from being the locality of the "Crater," already described; and Fort Sedgwick, opposed to Fort Mahone and Battery.

Fort Stedman, the site of which was taken and held on the 17th of June, 1864, by Gibbon's Division, of the Second Corps, and for month after month was exposed to a harassing fire, the trees near it bearing undisputed testimony, was also the point of assault of the rebel Gordon's Division, on the 25th of March, 1865. The move proved most successful for a time, but soon the fire from the batteries on either flank, and a successful assault of Hartranft's Division of the Ninth Corps, changed the aspect of affairs. The distance between the lines at this point is scarcely six hundred feet, and between the opposite pickets not more than two hundred. The long and tedious night watches probably made the men somewhat careless and sleepy, for the officers in their bomb-proofs were aroused from their slumbers by the very polite invitation that their presence was wanted in Petersburg. One of the most interesting sights to the writer of this article was the peculiar conformation of the ground occupied by the rebels to the

North of Colquitt's Salient. No one can accurately describe it. How the men survived during the heat of summer and the cold of winter, is incomprehensible. What can their habitations be likened unto? As you gaze upon them, they produce a most peculiar effect. It is a complete system of burrowing, in imitation of rats and moles; literally living under ground; the impromptu bomb-proofs promiscuously thrown together, no ventilation and no light, damp and cold, and, in winter, the small grate fire of bituminous coal impregnating the already close atmosphere with a deadly gas. No wonder, as a distinguished Episcopal divine said, the men became demoralized; want of good, wholesome diet, combined with these causes, was enough to dispirit the bravest heart. The Yankees, possessed of more energy and ingenuity, lived in palaces, comparatively speaking; in many places substantial bomb-proofs, and in others neatly constructed huts, added to their comfort. Over the many acres of ground occupied by these two points, Fort Stedman and Colquitt's Salient, a "shower of shells" rained, and scarce a foot of ground can be trod without disclosing a crater formed by them, the whole space being covered by fragments of iron.

One of the singular episodes of war occurred on the same day (the 25th of March) that the attack was made on Fort Stedman. Whilst the affair was being developed on the right, and the Fifth Corps was en route from its winter camps to render any assistance necessary, the Second and Sixth were ordered to advance on the left along their fronts, to create a diversion in favor of the Ninth. As these moves were progressing, the President of the United States, Mr. Lincoln, arrived at the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac from City Point, accompanied by Lieut. General Grant, a grand review of the whole army having been tendered in honor of his visit. As the programme could not be well executed under the circumstances, it was ordered that the Fifth Corps, then under arms and on the march, should be reviewed nearly opposite the centre of the line, whilst the fighting was kept up on the extreme right and left. This was done, and in the

midst of the conflict then raging on the extreme flanks, a gala day was held in the centre, in honor of the Chief Magistrate of the Nation. This was really the commencement of the final campaign of the Army of the Potomac.

The Crater has already been described, and is one of the greatest points of interest. The gallery can be traced along the surface by portions of it having caved in. The lines were closer here than at any other point—not more than four hundred and fifty feet apart. The chevaux-de-frise bear evidence of the leaden balls that kept constantly whizzing through the air.

The dam near Gracie's Salient was one of the appliances of the Engineer, intended to back the water of Poo Creek, and form a pond of water, for the purpose of creating an obstacle in front of the enemy's works, and prevent a sudden surprise. All kinds of devices are made use of to strengthen an exposed position. One of the most advanced points of the U. S. lines was Fort Sedgwick, standing boldly forward and constantly inviting attack. The work is a very irregular one, and is thrown across the Jerusalem Plank Road, one of the most important thoroughfares leading out of the city. It is a place of very great interest, on account of its exposed and prominent position for so long a period. Scarcely a day passed without witnessing a heavy artillery duel, and each hour of those many long and weary months, as two brave armies lay opposite to each other, could be heard the shrill, sharp report of some leaden messenger of death. It was here, as elsewhere, that only the reckless would dare expose the slightest part of the person even for a second, and well does it deserve the not very euphonious name to ears polite of "Fort Hell."

Between the two main lines at this point the distance is 1500 feet, a level plain stretching between them. Ever on the *qui vive*, frequently advantage was taken by either party to force back by surprise the picket line of the other. Knowing the importance of the position, the men strengthened their picket lines so as to become almost as strong as the main ones, the distance between them previous to the final assault being not more than

200 feet. To show the visitor what precautions were taken against surprise and capture, let him examine the front of Fort Sedgwick. First is the ditch of the work; then an abattis; then a fraise palisade; and last, though not least, two rows of wire entanglements. To storm the work, these obstructions all have to be removed or surmounted, in the face of heavy artillery and unerring musketry. To engage in such a murderous effort, bold hearts and unflinching determination on the part of brave men are requisite, and no truly good man can fail to honor those who look death so defiantly in the face, whatever be the justice of the cause for which they are willing to lay down their lives. On the morning of the 2nd of April, 1865, this ground became consecrated and holy to the memory of the soldiers who fell in that glorious assault upon the opposing batteries, and to those who so courageously defended their post of honor. To Potter's Division, of the Ninth Corps, belongs the glory of taking and afterwards holding this important position, in spite of the several desperate efforts to repossess it by the enemy. Its noble and gallant commander came near laying down his life in his country's cause on this occasion, at first having been reported mortally wounded, but finally recovered, after many long and weary days of confinement. Fort Mahone, to the left of the point of attack, belched forth its fierce artillery on the flank, but failed to make the assaulting party flinch. During the following night it was evacuated and possession taken of it. It was a sad sight to the writer of this article, in riding over the ground on the morning of the 3rd, to see it strewn with the dead and dying. Many were killed upon the very parapet of the enemy's work, the chevaux-de-frise intended for its defence having been converted into a bridge over which to cross the ditch. No further progress could be made, as the enemy fell back, when driven from his main position, to a still stronger line. Counting the picket line, a strong infantry parapet in itself, not less than four lines confronted Fort Sedgwick, showing how desperate the attempt to carry each of them successively would have proved.

But in describing this most historic portion of the line at this place, is somewhat anticipating the natural course of events. The principle generally carried out in the siege of Petersburg, was, after obtaining possession of a certain portion of its front, to fortify and strengthen the latter by a system of enclosed works, connected by lines of trenches, and also to cover the rear against any movement, especially cavalry raids, by a similar defensive arrangement. On the 20th of August, that part extending from the Appomattox River to the Jerusalem Plank Road, and its left flank retired and resting upon the Black Water Swamp, was so near completion as to be in readiness for the contemplated movement upon the Weldon Railroad. After the successful advance and the holding of that most important thoroughfare, and which proved to be the greatest blow the enemy had yet experienced, by severing the direct railroad connection South with Wilmington, the only sea-port left open to him, the front and rear were again strongly entrenched. Forts Wadsworth, Dushane, Alex. Hays, Howard, Stevenson, Davison, Blaisdell and Pat'k Kelly were among the number of works constructed. After an unwilling possession of this road had been yielded by the opposing army, several days of severe fighting having taken place in the neighborhood of the Yellow Tavern or Six Mile House, (subsequently pulled down in consequence of its cracked and dilapidated condition,) and at Reams' Station, some three miles further from the city than this last locality, this part of the line became, and continued to remain, very quiet. The distance between the works being considerably greater than that along the right flank, but little fighting took place, save one or two attempts to drive in the respective picket lines; especially "our friends, the rebs," during the winter months, wanted tents and blankets, and came to take them. Forts Wadsworth and Dushane are well worth the inspection of the visitor, to give him an idea of the exterior and interior of well-constructed field works, both of them being bastion forts. By the 26th of September the Military Railroad was in readiness to supply the Army. It extended from City Point to the Weldon Road.

The active operations of the Army were again resumed on the 29th of the same month, and during the two or three following days, the lines were extended to the West of the latter railroad for some few miles. The engagements near the Peebles and Pegram houses were then fought, the Fifth Corps principally participating. Some two or three rebel works were successfully assaulted and taken at this time—the one by Griffin's and the other by Ayres' Division. By this extension, eleven additional enclosed works, Keene, Urmston, Conahey, Fisher, Welsh, Gregg, Sampson, Cummings, Emory, Seibert and Clark, with several batteries, were linked with the already formidable cordon that surrounded the Army of the Potomac. At this time it was a thoroughly entrenched camp. The length of the entire line, from the Appomattox on the right to the left at Fort Fisher, and thence back to Fort Bross, on the Black Water Swamp, made at this time a continuous stretch of earth-works of more than twenty-three miles. Adding to this the section from Fort Bross to the James River, the line measures more than thirty-two miles, comprising thirty-six forts and fifty batteries. In addition to these there were eight other enclosed works along the inner line of the defence of City Point. Of course, this enumeration does not include the position in front of the Army of the James, between the Appomattox and the James, and North of the latter river. By the latter part of October, 1864, all these works were completed, and in a defensible condition. A movement was ordered for the afternoon of the 26th of that month, in which a greater part of the Army participated. It continued during the 27th and 28th, extending across Hatcher's Run to the Boydton Plank Road, ending in the return of the troops to their original camps. With the exception of a movement of the Fifth Corps South along the Weldon Railroad, and sundry dispositions of the other Corps to support it, the Army remained during the winter months comparatively quiet. The movement which commenced on the 5th of February, and continued during the 6th and 7th, on which days the cavalry, and the Fifth and Second Corps performed some good fighting,

ended in taking up a line extending from Fort Sampson to Hatcher's Run, which was subsequently entrenched. This addition of about four miles made a continuous front line of fifteen miles from the crossing of the Vaughan road over the latter stream to the Appomattox below Petersburg. Confronting this along the entire distance, and nearly parallel to it, was the entrenched line of the enemy. This last move ended all operations until the opening of the final brief and triumphant campaign on the 26th of March, ending in the capitulation of the Army of Northern Virginia on the 9th of April, 1865.

For the visitor there are several points of interest between the Weldon Road and Hatcher's Run. Of these, the "Poplar Grove Church" is deserving of great praise and admiration. In the midst of the many demands made in time of battle and of siege upon the services of the 50th N. Y. Volunteer Engineers, the officers and men found pleasure in designing, planning and building the beautiful rustic structure referred to, and devoting the same to the worship of the Great God of Battles. The timber upon the spot, and the tools with which they were provided for engineering purposes, furnished the material and means wherewith to exercise the taste, genius and energy displayed. It is built not very far from the site of the old "Poplar Spring Meeting House," a plain country frame church, which was used at different times as a hospital by both armies during the operations on the 29th and 30th of September, and 1st and 2nd of October, 1864. The present church was used for the same purpose throughout the movements on the last of March and 1st and 2nd of April, 1865. The Regiment, upon moving away from camp to take part in the pursuit of Lee's Army, left a wooden tablet over the main entrance to the church, with these words inscribed upon it: "Presented to the Trustees of the Poplar Spring Church, by the 50th Regiment New York Volunteer Engineers." It has been proposed to move the edifice to the Central Park of New York City, as one of the mementoes of the war, and certainly no more interesting and striking feature could be added to the

already many beautiful adornments that embellish those tasteful and admirably designed grounds. Not far from the church is the "Signal Tower" constructed by the same Regiment. For those who possess the energy to climb several ladders to the height of one hundred and fifty feet, and do not suffer from dizziness, the view obtained from the top is very extensive and interesting, overlooking the entire field of operations of the two Armies that lay opposite to each other for so many months. It was used to watch the movements of the enemy. Fort Fisher, besides being a specimen of a well constructed field work, a large bastion fort, is also the point in front of which Getty's Division of the Sixth Corps moved out and broke through the enemy's lines on the morning of the 2nd of April, whilst the Second and Twenty-fourth Corps simultaneously on the left, and the Ninth on the right, accomplished the same purpose. The glorious news from Sheridan's Cavalry and Griffin's Fifth Corps at "Five Forks," that spread along the lines of the Army after dark on the evening of the 2nd, gave new inspiration to the men, who had already received their orders and were anxious to brave death in the fulfillment of the part they were called upon to play in the great drama of that eventful day, the culmination, the crowning glory of the grand achievements of years, which at last brought peace once more upon our prosperous land.

After forcing the lines and wheeling to the right with their resistless columns, a brigade of each of the two corps, the Sixth and Twenty-fourth, had the extreme satisfaction of making the final attack upon the last strongholds of the enemy's entrenched position. The assaults upon Fort Baldwin and Fort Gregg will long be remembered as two of the most brilliant of the war. The several desperate efforts covered the ground with dead and wounded. The numerous graves now seen around them attest that these points of danger were the posts of honor. With their fall the fate of Petersburg was settled. Well might Lee call his staff about him, and pointing to Fort Gregg, ask them to witness a most gallant defence. The words had scarcely fallen from his lips when, behold! the "Stars and Stripes" were unfurled to the breeze over the parapet, the determined and brave band of men who defended it only yielding when all hope had fled. The General then bade his staff separate, and seemed in those last moments as if anxious to court death, and lay down his life in a cause which so long his strong arm had upheld. His headquarters at this time were at the Turnbull house, not far distant from these works.

Near Fort Gregg, where Indian Town Creek crosses the Boydton Plank Road, can be seen a heavy piece of earthwork. It is a large dam across the stream, for the purpose of backing up the water, and creating an artificial structure. Unfortunately for the builders, the structure gave way, and a wall of water rushed forward, carrying before it bridges and trees, and for a time submerging the islands in the Appomattox. One who stood on the bank of the river and witnessed the effect, said that it appeared as if the bottom of the river had suddenly dropped out, every island so quickly disappeared without an apparent cause.

The writer has so far very hastily and superficially dwelt upon the chief points to be examined along the lines within a few miles of Petersburg, consisting, as already stated, of Fort Stedman, Colquitt's Salient, Gracie's Salient, Elliott's Salient, (the Crater,) Forts Sedgwick and Mahone, Forts Wadsworth and Dushane, the Poplar Grove Church, the Signal Tower, Forts Fisher and Gregg. More might be written of the movements across Hatcher's Run, of the battle fields of Five Forks, Sutherland's Station, Sailor's Creek, High Bridge and Farmville, and of the pursuit of Lee's Army and its surrender at Appomattox Court House; but the original object of this hastily prepared article has been accomplished, and the writer must leave to those who peruse it how successfully his work has been done. He hopes it will prove of some slight value in pointing out the places of greatest interest, and in refreshing the memories of those who make a pilgrimage to this celebrated locality in regard to some of the incidents that transpired.

The "Sketch of the Entrenched Lines immediately in front of Petersburg" has been very carefully prepared, indicating the many roads by which different parts of the line can be reached, and those communicating directly from point to point. A careful study of this map, with a driver sufficiently well acquainted with the locale and names of places, will guide any one over the country.

APPENDIX.

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The following letter to the *American Agriculturist*, written by its talented Editor, Mr. Judd, is appended entire, and will be found of great interest and assistance to visitors :

Visit to a Virginia Battle Field.

A GUIDE TO THE CHIEF POINTS OF INTEREST.

JARRATT HOUSE, PETERSBURG, VA., }
June 7th, 1865. }

Last July 4th, while engaged with the Sanitary Commission in caring for our sick and wounded soldiers, I wrote to the readers of the *Agriculturist* from a point two to three miles north-east of where I now sit, giving an outline map of the localities, and, so far as I could then see, of the military works around the city. Then I could only look over into these streets ; to-day, I am pleasantly seated in the heart of the city, with my family and a party of friends. Then a hundred thousand men were intent upon breaking through the armed forces that met them at every point, and the almost unceasing roar of deep toned cannon, and the rattle of small arms broke upon the ear by day and by night. To-day, only here and there will one find an armed man in blue, and none in grey, and over the vast charnel field nought but the singing of birds, in the few remaining groves, disturbs the death-like stillness. Then I wrote, that no other spot I had ever seen in this country or in Europe, would so well repay a visit immediately after the war should close, as the region around Petersburg. To-day I feel this more strongly than then. For three days I have wandered among the endless lines of earth-works and fortifications that belt Petersburg on all sides but the north, and I am sure that no more intensely interesting locality is to be found in the world, when we take into account the number of men engaged, the length of time they were here, the severity of the almost daily struggles, and the closing up of the great war, of which the final decisive contest was fought just southwest of this city. That is hardly an over-estimate which gives 150 to 200 miles as the combined

length of the earth-works, rifle-pits, etc., within ten miles of Petersburg. These alone, seen in their present condition, before being greatly marred by the elements, are worth a journey of a thousand miles. Hundreds now come daily, from almost all parts of the country, and many thousands will doubtless visit this place the present year, while the locality will for many years, if not centuries, be increasingly attractive. I learn that very few of the present visitors see more than a small part of what is to be seen hereabouts, because there are no maps or guides to assist them. Thus, most examine the "Mine," Forts Steadman, Sedgwick ("Hell,"), and Mahone ("Damnation,") and go home without visiting the field of the decisive operations on April 1st and 2nd, last. At the request of many persons here, I will attempt to give a little outline of some of the more interesting points.

The map shows the relative position of Petersburg and City Point. The last was Gen. Grant's headquarters, and the base of supplies for the Army of the Potomac, during ten months. In the map is also a general outline of the position of forts, etc., around Petersburg, prior to April 1, this year. Beyond or outside of the space covered by the map, for miles away, are to be found forts, earthworks, and scenes of skirmishes and pitched battles, as at Reams' Station down the Weldon railroad, at Five Forks several miles south-west, and also on the Boydton Plank Road, and along Hatcher's Run. The space covered by the map is cut up with lines of breastworks, rifle-pits, earth-forts, thousands of soldiers' huts still standing, and almost unending lines of abatis (ab-a-tee). These last consist of sharpened sticks and tree tops placed firmly in the ground, and leaning outward, a few rods in front of the main lines and around the forts, arranged so as to greatly obstruct the approach of an enemy. Most of the abatis are bound together by strong wires. They are being removed quite rapidly for firewood, by the negroes and other inhabitants of Petersburg. This, with the washing down of the many earth-ridges and rifle-pits by rains, and the leveling of others for agricultural purposes, will materially change the appearance of the whole region ere long. The main lines consist chiefly of heavy continuous banks of earth, high enough to shield the bodies of the men, too thick to be battered down by cannon, and having a ditch on the side next to the enemy. Forts and batteries are built at convenient distances along the lines, to cover the space between them, and are usually placed upon knolls, or higher portions of the

ground. Some of the forts are very large and well finished, with bomb-proofs. A bomb-proof is usually made thus: a shallow cellar is dug, if the ground allow, and walls of logs are laid, $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 feet high; long log beams are laid across the top, projecting a few feet each way; upon these a flooring of logs is placed, and earth piled over, and also up against the sides, so thick as to be impenetrable by shell, thus forming a secure retreat. Air and some light enter between the cross-beams. These bomb-proofs are of various sizes and forms; one in Fort Wadsworth is about 150 feet long and some 12 feet wide inside. Ammunition magazines are similarly built. Sometimes the earth walls of the bomb-proofs, and of the forts themselves, are kept perpendicular by means of bags, or baskets of earth, or by fascines (bundles of long rods or sticks bound together). Some of the forts are fine specimens of military workmanship, as Fort Fisher, and Forts Wadsworth and Sedgwick.

The most interesting points to be examined by the transient visitor, are: Fort Gregg, (rebel,) Fort Fisher and the tower or observatory (150 feet high) near it, Poplar Grove Church, Forts Wadsworth, Sedgwick and Mahone, the Mine, and Fort Steadman. On horseback, one can go the round of all these in a day; but two or three days will be far more satisfactory. I will sketch briefly a two days trip by a party of thirteen of us—two ladies, three children of 9 to 14 years, with four men besides the driver, all in a large covered spring wagon, and four men on horseback. Outfit: a box of eatables, a jug of water and cup, some bags for holding relics, a large hatchet, and field glasses to aid the eyes, brought from home. Clothing and shoes adapted to rough journey.

FIRST DAY'S TRIP.

Starting from the Jarratt House westward, and then deflecting to the left, we passed the north side of the rebel hospitals, and continued west quarter to half mile, until a short turn to the left (south) took us nearly to Mr. Green's house. Then turning to the right, and passing by the negro huts, we continued west across a brook, and up a hill, going just south of Roger A. Prior's residence, situated in the grove of trees on the right. Bending to the south south-west, we followed a field road to the rebel Fort Gregg, a large prominent fort on a hill, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from Mr. Prior's house. All along the route, so far, and indeed all the rest of the way, are seen rifle-pits, breastworks, etc. On the road west from the

hospitals, the chimnies in the distance (west) indicate where Gen. Lee's headquarters were before the buildings were burned on the evacuation. Before reaching Fort Gregg, we see on the left the remains of a large dam, built to overflow the Union camps, some distance southward.—*Fort Gregg.* There are two forts of this name, one Union and one Rebel. The latter is a point of great interest. Strong as it is, it was assaulted and taken by storm on April 2nd. Standing on the fort and looking south-east, we see the valley through which the heavy assaulting party came up amid a tempest of lead and iron. The many Union graves in front, and the mounds of rebel dead buried in its rear, with the cannon shot and bullet holes in the palisades, indicate the severity of the struggle. How flesh and blood could have lived through the fire of cannon and musketry, crossed the deep ditch, and climbed into the fort we stand on, it is almost impossible to conceive. But it was done, and this was one of the crowning achievements that secured the evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond. One will not soon tire here, looking over the wide fields on every side, and reading the description of the assault. Just west of Fort Gregg is a large earthwork called Fort Baldwin, and a heavy battery lies a little east of Fort Gregg. Next, going about a mile to the south south-east, we passed through a stumpy road and crossed the outer lines and breastworks of the two opposing armies, and thence to a farm house, upon the proprietor of which we called, and had a lengthy and interesting chat. He remained here all through the war, and from him we learned many particulars of events of which he had been an eye-witness. From the high ground north-east of his house, is, to us, the most interesting view any where to be seen—including the location of the two armies from September to April, many miles of earthworks, and the scene of the final successful strategic move of the Union army. Our forces had for six months held this line, including Forts Fisher, Welch, etc., south of us. Frequent efforts had been made to pass around to the left and reach the Southside Railroad, but without avail. The last week in March a heavy force, including Gen. Sheridan's cavalry and the 5th Army Corps, made a detour to the south, and off south-west towards Dinwiddie Court House, as if striking for Burkesville or some nearer point on the Southside Railroad. To oppose these, Gen. Lee drew out a large number of his forces from in and around Petersburg, and marched them westward. This was just what Gen. Grant desired. When

they were far enough off the 6th and 24th corps dashed through from Fort Fisher, overcame all resistance, and reached the railroad a mile or so north-west of Fort Gregg (rebel). This fort and others near it were captured, and the enemy's army was thus cut in two. This is indeed the Waterloo of America, compared with which the old Belgian battle-field shrinks into insignificance. We advise every one coming to Petersburg, to visit this locality, and from here, and from Fort Fisher and the observatory near by, study the whole field.

Remunerating our former friend for his time we were consuming, and taking him with us a short distance as a further guide, we next went a little to the south-east to Fort Fisher, which is one of the finest constructed works to be seen here, though hardly so large as Forts Wadsworth, Sedgwick and Steadman. From the top of Fort Fisher, and especially from the observatory near it, 150 feet high, one has a grand view of the fields already described, and can take in at a glance many square miles of the surrounding country. At this point our entire party would have gone home well satisfied with their long journey from home, if no more was to be seen.

But I must omit details, beyond calling attention to the numerous camp huts which cover the country, a few acres in a place, for miles around. We next went to the "Poplar Grove Church," whose steeple can be seen in a grove to the south-east. This Church, and the surrounding cabins—mansions we might call them—were constructed by the 50th N. Y. Engineer Regiment. Nowhere, in this country or in Europe, have I seen rustic work that would compare with what is to be seen in this camp, and in the hospital camp a hundred rods or so north-west. Without the aid of engravings, I will not attempt to describe the beautiful arrangement of pine logs, poles and twigs in the attractive structures. Let no one coming hither fail to see them. Said a traveling companion, as he contrasted these camps and our various forts with those of the enemy, "it is no wonder our men conquered." The old Poplar Grove Church in the vicinity having been burned in the army movements, or by the enemy, this Church was presented to the trustees by the ingenious builders; otherwise we would advocate its removal to the N. Y. Central Park. Some of the huts or dwellings here should certainly be moved to more central or accessible points, as monuments of the skill of our "thinking bayonets."

Turning from the Church to the north-east, we next went to Fort Wadsworth, on the Weldon Railroad, another point

of much interest. Those who have time may well go Southward to Fort Dushane, and still further to Reams' Station, and southwest along Hatcher's Run, the Five Forks, etc. Those positively limited for time, and not too wearied, may continue eastward, to Forts Howard, Alexander Hayes, Davis, Sedgwick, Mahone, etc., and perhaps finish up the tour in a single day, though it is too much for most visitors who wish to get a full conception of this region. Our party examined Forts Howard and Hayes, the surrounding camps, of which the neatly constructed huts are still standing, and then turned up the Weldon Railroad towards Petersburg. Passing through the lines of abattis, the skirmish line of breastworks and rifle-pits, between the two armies, at the distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles towards the city we struck and examined the very heavy main front line of the enemy. We next visited the "lead works," on our way to the city, and reached our hotel at $7\frac{1}{2}$ P. M., most of the party wearied out, but with heads and hearts full. Retiring early, a good night's sleep put us all in good trim for the

SECOND DAY'S TRIP.

Starting with the same conveyance as yesterday, we went north-east through the city, noting on the way the effects of shells upon the houses, and took the Jerusalem Plank Road to the top of "Cemetery Hill," where is a fine bird's-eye view of the works east and north-east of the city. A short distance on, we turned to the left and visited the "Mine." Our newspaper description, read on the spot, brought vividly to the mind and eye events occurring here on the morning of July 30th, 1864. An hour spent here and over at the entrance to the Mine, we returned to the Jerusalem Plank Road, and went south-east to Forts Mahone and Sedgwick, noting along the way the ditches and traverses through which troops and supplies from Petersburg reached the advanced lines of the enemy, through the high ground, or passed from one earth-work to another. Forts Mahone ("Damnation") and Sedgwick ("Hell") are very near each other, and are both on high ground. More men were daily killed and wounded at these forts, than at any other points on the lines. They were fighting almost constantly for months. To expose one's person hereabouts was almost certain death. The picket lines between these forts, guarded by heavy breastworks, were so near that the men could talk familiarly together from behind their covers. There is more digging of the earth into pits,

ditches, etc., at this part of the lines, than at any other. Passing on south-east to Fort Davis, we turned north, followed the line of Union fortifications, looking into Forts Rice, Mickle, Morton, and Haskill, and entered Fort Steadman. The taking of this by the enemy last March, and the speedy recovery of it, are doubtless well remembered by every reader. The bullet and cannon ball and shell marks on almost every square foot of the trees, from bottom to top, on every side, show plainly the fierceness of the conflict here, but I cannot spare room for description. Passing on to Fort McGilvery, and back again to the main road from City Point, we entered Petersburg from the north-east side, and had a fresh view of the shell scarred and pierced houses. Every rod of the route we have taken, perhaps 15 to 20 miles in the two days, is full of interest. No other field of strife so extensive and so varied has ever been seen in this country, or any other, and we trust never will be. Now, no enemies, no bushwhackers, and no restrictions upon travel are anywhere to be met with in or around Petersburg or Richmond.

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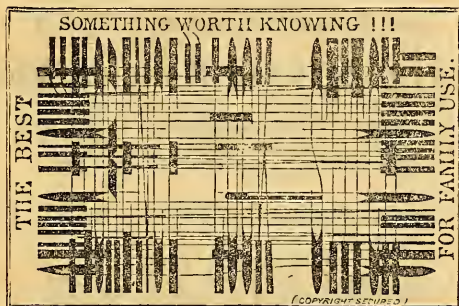
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